arttamulla intu matam

The *magnum opus* of Kaviyarasu Kannadasan

Read in English......

A humble tribute of Dr.N.RAMANI to a great poet....

BOOK III

Four

The Dharma of Family

I had read in a magazine.

A Tamil had been abroad. He met an American couple. They were in an embrace just outside a hotel.

The American introduced her to the Tamilian as his third wife. He also said that he had *cut off* the first two.

He told the Tamilian "It’s always better to sever connections when you can’t agree with each other".

He also said, "Take life for what it is. Why ascribe an abstract culture to it?

"Because I have married a woman, what point is there in living with her, all the while quarrelling? It’s fair to take in a new one".

The cattle do the same. But they don’t go to the Registrar’s Office for an marriage registration. They also don’t go to the court for a divorce.

If we can live anyhow, there will only be animals called men and women.

There will be no place for cultured relationships.

But Hinduism stands out by virtue of such sustaining relationships.

The Hindu Dharma describes family life as a holy mission. That’s why Tamil named it *illaram* - the holy domestic mission.

One can have as many wives as he pleases according to the Hindu dharma. But he is the only husband to all of them.

Even if he has kept one of them out of his way, she remains his wife until death.

The husband has the obligation to satisfy her in all respects.

There are many who fail in these obligation.

They are to be taken only as these who had ignored their obligations. They are not permitted to do so.

Even among the Hindus, a section had the custom of remarriage for women. It prevails even at present.

But Hinduism does not approve of it.

How did this come to be?

It came to be out of a sense of vengeance between factions in conflict.

There is the habit giving a girl given in marriage into a family and taking a girl into one's own family from the other.

If two families have each a boy and a girl, the girl from the one is given in marriage to the other family and the turn the other girl is taken in as the daughter-in-law.

When one such pair lives happily , the other pair may have a quarrelsome life.

If the quarrelsome husband returns his wife to her parents' house, the other girl may also be sent home in vengeance, in spite of happy married life.

If one of the girls is made to cut off her *tali* and marry another, the other girl is compelled to do the same out of a spirit of vengeance.

The habit that was the result of anger became customary during later days.

But the Hindu Dharma does not approve of it even in stories.

It added family Dharma to the list of dharmas.

The husband has to satisfy the soul thirst of his wife rather than just her physical lust.

But the wife has to satisfy the husband's lust and win his soul over to herself.

Though physical satisfaction was an obligation for man to be fulfilled, it was purely of secondary significance.

If we were to acknowledge the fact, we should say that eighty out of a hundred men do not satisfy the physical lust of the wife. If the same were to be the state of affairs abroad, it would be reason enough for a divorce.

The Hindu wife considers the extent of satisfaction she gets as the extent of her desire.

Through such patience, at one point of time, she gets totally satisfied.

Let's see the details.

During the early days of coition, the husband is satisfied.

The lust and heat of coition renders him weak.

If he keeps on with one woman only, his system gets over the weakness and he becomes steadier.

The pent up fury of lust in the body of the wife, makes him weak and quickens his ejaculation.

Repeated coition between a single pair for a long period of time brings them to simultaneous discharge.

If the time of ejaculation and orgasm are simultaneous, such coition is called *samakala bogam* - simultaenous enjoyment.

This simulatenous ejaculation renders them both equally steady.

When the rain water flows through a tank, the fish in the tank reach the street. Similarly at the point of simulatenous ejaculation, the sperms in the semen reach the wife's body and the vaginal secretion enters the man's body.

Only long cohahitation makes this possible.

This tightens the bond between them.

Healthy children are born.

They grow with filial affection.

There arises a happy family.

A healthy nation is built on such healthy families.

That's why Hinduism advocates family life as a Dharma.

In family life, intercourse is only a part.

The other part is its relationship with the others.

It's other name is hospitality.

The householder is the one who sees off the departing guest awaiting the incoming one.

To be hospitable is to be civilised according to the Hindu Dharma

The husband and wife are expected not to eat for themselves unless they have fed at least one guest.

The householders therefore will keep looking for a mendicant or a beggar.

Hinduism assigned a certain civilized attribute to the guest too.

It consists of appreciating whatever food is served however unpalatable may it be.

A still greater virtue is that of the wife taking her food only after having fed the husband and eating of the same leaf.

There are people who say it is unhygienic.

The Hindu wife prefers as much health for herself as the husband enjoys.

If the husband is a consumptive, she prefers to become a consumptive herself and therefore eats off the same leaf.

It is said that the people who lived in the submerged continent of Lemuria had the habit of wounding the fingers of both the husband and wife and keeping them tied together.

It is meant to bring about the mixing of the blood.

The Hindu wife does it in the abstract.

She does not eat for herself before her husband, even if it be for days.

In the gluttonous West, it is a great thing if the husband gets what is left after the wife had eaten for herself.

These days, family women wear jasmine flowers on their hair on all days.

But during those days, there was an excellent habit.

Those were the days when even the husband and wife went to bed unnoticed by others.

They will meet at midnight and sleep separately after coition.

The husband will understand the wife’s readiness even in the evening.

If she has no jasmine on her hair, she has menstruated.

Women in their menses period will usually stay in isolated rooms.

Where the husband and wife do not have privacy during the day, the wife makes use of jasmine to indicate her physical condition of unpreparedness for coition, having no jasmine on her hair.

If the wife were to become pregnant, she will not disclose it to her husband; her mother-in-law has to inform her son of it.

This is the typical bashfulness of a married woman.

Moreover she does not refer to her husband as "My husband" while talking to others. She will name one of the children and say "His father".

That’s the declaration of a promise.

"Thai ariyatha sul unto?" is a proverb.

("Which mother does not know whose child she’s carrying?")

She promises that the child from her womb is her husband’s own.

In our clan, when the wife bewails the death of her husband, she will call him *"pinju makkal ayya"* (the father of unripe children).

Hinduism has framed excellent rules and regulations for family life.

The usual eruptions of anger and anxieties apart, every Hindu family is equal to two thousand temples.

Five

The Knowledge of the Ultimate Truth

When we console a person in suffering, we usually say, "The mind construes everything. Whatever has happened has already happened. Be quiet".

... ...

What we are able to obtain becomes the ordinary.

The scene of an easy life wears a deserted look.

The wife is prepared to be abed with the husband whether it is day or night. This readiness by itself renders her not-so-beautiful and not-so-pleasurable.

When the pilgrimage to Kashi took three months, our forefathers longed to shorten it to three weeks.

Now that we can go there in three hours, even the three hours appear too long.

With our feet planted on something and the eyes looking at something else, human life is coursing through an illusion.

At times we feel, "There is happiness where we are."

At one point of time we become weary of life.

What then in permanent? What offers lasting bliss?

Swami Vivekananda says that neither our happiness nor our sorrows are real.

The wisdom to remain in the same forest, to bathe in the same river and to be cremated in the same forest is not the privilege of all.

The desire to shift places; the desire for one women after the other; the constant dissatisfaction with what one has and the desire for more - human life is like a leaf floating in the wind slowly descending all the while; it does not fall down straight, like a stone.

Birth is the result of an illusory passion; life is a process of illusive desires; ultimately the distress of suffering an undesired death - such is human life.

In the midst of such spiritual darkness, Vivekananda lit the light of wisdom *(jnanadheepam)* to lead us to the ultimate truth.

The one who has vomited after taking in *"payasam'* one day (rice or barley boiled in milk as sweetened, in semi liquid form) is scared of it for the rest of his life.

The one who has seen a scorpion at a particular place one day is sacred of the place for the rest of his life.

The one who has found a gold ring one day expects to find a ring there everyday.

He gilds the passing with the lasting. He languishes, having lost his peace of mind, which can be felt only in the awareness of the lasting.

When is Truth to dawn in these minds?

He has to reconcile the accounts of his life with the awareness that whatever have happened are not to happen over again just as the full grown arms and legs do not grow any further; with the awareness that whatever have already been obtained are not to be obtained over again; with the awareness that it is futile to desire those not obtained so far.

Swami Vivekananda described this as the awareness of Truth.

If it has to be put in the simple and clear terms of our forefathers, realization of Truth consists of concluding that nothing is of human volition; everything is only of his action. *(nammale avathu ethumillai, natappathellam avan ceyal)*

Those who belong to the school of rationalism may refute this claim.

They may argue that nothing in beyond human accomplishment.

I would like to ask them.

How much of what they wanted to happen in their life had actually happened? How many incidents had occurred in their lives even without their having willed them to occur?

Have they been satisfied at any stage in their lives?

Why do their desires keep on increasing year by year?

Why were they not prevented by their rational self?

When Paranthaman declared that *Jnana* (awareness) is better than *Karma* (action) Arjuna asked, " What Karma then do you want me to perform?"

At that point, Paranthaman describes how jnana takes its origin at the end of karma.

The woman is beautiful indeed to look at! But a few days since going to bed with her, syphilis attacks.

The awareness that one should not be carried away by physical beauty is realised only then.

As it is understood in slow degrees that the physical feeling *(mey unarvu)* only creates a mirage, true awareness *(meyyunarvu)* begins its advent.

[Note : "mey" in Tamil means both "the body" (udal) and Truth (unmai; sathiyam)]

It can be realised only through experience. But Swami Vivekananda realised it through his knowledge. That’s why he had become enlightenment at a young age.

If aware, if enlightened, there is neither sweetness nor bitterness; neither likes nor dislikes;

There is no happiness at birth and no sadness at death.

The spate of blows become those falling on a rock and not on the flesh.

The refrain of the aware is *ponal pokattum pota* (Let the bygones be the bygones).

There is nothing that can be prevented by tears.

There is nothing that can be obtained with laughter.

There is no atonement in writhing.

To live the life of a human being all the while remaining a stone is not to be enlightened. To grow into the aware is to be enlightened.

The word *mey* means both the holy and truth.

But the body is not true.

Meyyunarvu (enlightenment) does not mean "awareness of the body" but only "awareness of the Truth".

It is the awareness of the ultimate truth that is the right path unto the one who desires peace for ever.

SIX

Humanism

Someone seems to have asked Vinayakar, "Sakthi and Sivan stand as the Arthanari. Where did their other halves go?"

Vinayakar’s answer had been, "They have become men and women in the world".

I have read such a story somewhere.

Teivam manusa rupayana is a saying in Sanskrit.

Every man has taken his origin form the atom of the Paraman.

Every woman has taken her origin from the atom of Sakti.

That’s why the infant at birth knows not treachery, knavery, falsity and naivete.

The infant is the symbol of the divine atom.

Every child is born as the God.

But then why do some children grow into thieves while a few others grow into geniuses.

God wills to make the world a field for the interplay of passions. He wills to govern the dynamics of the world.

If all children remain as they are born even as they keep growing, there will be no meaning for worldly life.

If there are no conflicting passions, there will be no conflict of interests.

If there are no conflicts of interests there will be no realisation of Truth.

"Realise the goodness of shade while in the sunshine".

Strong sunshine is necessary to realise the comfort shade has to offer.

Drought is necessary to realise the necessity of rain.

Brutalism is necessary to realise the merit of humanism.

Man is necessary to realise the divine.

Men and women created by Uma and Maheswaran are of three kinds:

The brutish;

The human;

The divine;

Man stands between the ignoble and the noble.

While coming across brutality, humanism is longed for.

While coming across man, the necessity for the divine is felt.

If all become divine, the concept of divinity will die.

If all become brutish, there will be no necessity for the divine.

The man between the brute and the divine becomes the father of the dynamics of the world.

Only when man is duly perceived, the divine and the brute are realised for what they are.

That’s why Hinduism initiated the attempt to cultivate humanism among men.

That’s what’s exactly humanism.

The characters appearing in the ithihasas are human.

The man Rama became the divine Rama by virtue of his conduct.

The man Ravanan became the brute by virtue of his behaviour.

The Pandavas became the divine.

The Gauravas became the brutes.

If humanism prevails between man and man, God appears within the heart of each man.

The heart is the temple; the deity therein is humanism.

The jnanis dwelling in the forests were not in search of the God there in the forests; they tried to find God within man.

The concept of Dharma is the means through which the god in the temple is transferred to the heart of man.

The loving is the God.

The sympathetic is the God.

The chaste is the God.

The virtuous is the God.

Thus whichever is noble in man was attributed the status of the divine.

That's why there was the necessity for the instituion of religion to bring man up from lower appetencies to higher states of being.

Hinduism is the first of religions which had thus sprung.

Hinduism showed how a temple can be made of the place where man is, without dissociating man from the routine duties of the average man.

She who brings rain about and makes the fleshy damp sheaths of the plantain tree burn is not the sincerely virtuous.

She who ensures no flow of tears from her husband's eyes and she who guards against the flame of anger in her husband's heart alone is the sincerely virtuous.

Even if she is in a hut, it becomes a temple.

He who materialises the holy ash from nowhere is not the enlightened. He who cultivates the knowledge of truth in an empty heart is alone the enlightened.

He who usefully distributes what is cultivated is the scientist.

They alone know the mysterious ways of the divine. They alone can device the course of any journey.

That's why their souls become great souls while those of the others remain just souls.

To make a temple of one's own dwelling is humanism. To promote such a humanism is the business of religion.

Hinduism has a special distinction in this regard.

No philosophy prescribes either a particular number of pilgrimages or a particular number of holy dips in particular temples.

We have devised such rituals for ourselves, for the sake of our own satisfaction.

Temples are places where those who can't make temples of their own houses dump their sufferings and cry out.

The temple tanks are meant to wash the body and pray unto Umapathy; they are meant only for those who can't wash their own hearts and see Maheswaran in themselves.

The congregation of people in the name of festivals has a definite purpose. When thousands are witnessed in all their humility, such humility will come to be adopted by everybody.

The mind that can't be focussed while alone is focused in the temples.

Thoughts are diverted into acts of breaking coconuts in offering and lighting the camphor only to guard it against possible confusion.

Hinduism has done its best to keep man as man.

If everyone becomes a Sankaracharya Swami, what respect will preaching have?

But those who are affluent can become a Pari or a Pachaiyappar or an Alakappar.

Those who have a clear head can become the leaders.

Those who are physically strong can extend manual service.

Those who could do nothing can at least remain within the four walls of their own houses and maintain their household through honest means.

Non violence to such an extent as not even to step upon an ant; charitable nature as to share whatever little or much one may have - Hinduism advocates such humanism.

Hinduism preaches refraining from stealing even in abject poverty.

If the minister loses his position, he vacates the house.

If man loses his position, he vacates the world.

But as long as he is alive, every man occupies a particular position.

When a minister goes wrong, an enquiry commission is constituted; When a man goes wrong, only Maheswaran has to sit on judgement.

Lest he should stand with folded hands and hung head in the God's court, Hinduism puts man's documents in order even here and now.

What is the gift of the humanism of Hinduism?

Extend the good unto those who have done well unto you. Forget the one who has wronged you.

When you can't do the good, refrain from the wrong.

Where every man adopts this principle, we will have a society where there is neither animosity nor affliction.

The avowed objective of Hinduism is the making of such a society.

The truth that has been firmly established until the day is that a good Hindu has always remained a good man.

SEVEN

The Snake in the Garland

The World is called the *pirapancha* in Sanskrit. The term is self explanatory in that the five *(pancha)* elements have gone into the making of this world.

How will it be to get lost in God-consciousness forgetting this world, forgetting worldly bonds, affections, happiness, sadness and all thereof?

How to obtain that jnana?

Even if a beautiful woman were to be within sight, not she but only the God within her is to be seen.

Even if crores of currency notes are heaped in front of us, not the wealth in it but only God in it is to be seen.

Even if you were to get the highest office in the world, not the bliss of power but Supreme Being *(paramporul)* is to be seen in it.

Even if you were to see the kith or kin lying dead, not a corpse but the God of justice in his bed is to be seen.

He’s there is all happiness. He’s there also in all sadness; He’s there in birth; He’s there in death too.

He should appear to your eyes as the all pervasive, negating the sense of here and there; as the bright embodiment of happiness.

How is this possible?

If a beautiful deerling were to be dead, remove the flesh, inside and keep its skin cured.

What if the sun shines or it rains on a piece of rock?

What if you pour cold water or hot water on a sculpture.

That’s the state of equipoise, free from any vacillation whatsoever.

God is to be seen in that state of equipoise.

Arjuna asks Kannan what prompts man to commit sins. Kannan identifies it as desire.

The "Gita" says:

Innumerable are the kinds of lust, malice, arrogance and envy.

Nothing of them are fulfilled.

We are not able to give up anything satisfied with it at any point of time.

Our thoughts fetter us all around and keep dragging us along.

There is disharmony in the music of the veena of man.

Hinduism shows the way to get rid of thousands of snares and unite with God.

There’s a pleasure in it, there’s a fearlessness in it.

If worldly life consists of being dead while living, jnana consists of living like the dead.

Hinduism illustrates this attitude with the metaphor of a drop of water on a lotus leaf.

Hinduism also shows the way to the stillness like the stillness of water which transcends even detached life.

The sweet becomes bitter at a particular point of continuous consumption.

When the bitterness of life is tasted, aversion towards life comes to be.

This aversion grows in magnitude and the heart is afire.

Desire alone is responsible for this development of affairs.

There is a pleasure indeed in the *jnana yoga nirvikalpa samathi* in which one detaches oneself from the passions of the world and becomes neither happy at birth nor sad at death.

You may turn round and ask me if it is possible to keep living in this world and still be away from the fetters of worldly phenomena.

I’m about to explain the same.

I saw a film in production some time back.

It’s title was *Sita Kalyanam* (Sita’s marriage).

As soon as I saw the character of Sita on the screen, my mind flew into the Kambaramayanam.

I don’t remember what I saw on the screen.

The eyes were glued to the screen; but the mind was reminded of *Mithilai Katchi Padalam* in the Kambaramayanam.

I found it very difficult to bring myself back to what I was seeing on the screen.

That is an instance of how the mind which gets involved in something comes to ignore everything else around. To get involved in something is again an illusion of the mind, suspension of a sort.

If we get involved in God, we get rid of the entire phenomenal distractions of the world.

The Vanati Pathippakam has published a book of 900 pages compiling the thoughts of Kanchi Parameswara Swamikal, with the title *The Voice of God (theivathin kural).*

Let me quote an instance in whole; it will clarify many concepts.

The essay is such that, not a single line can be dispensed with.

The title of the chapter is *Kannan as well as Kamban have said (it) (kannanum sonnan; kambanum sonnan).*

I will quote it in its entirely.

"If atman is the basis of all, how is it said to transcend even itself? It is puzzling. Krishna Paramathma confuses the mind with contradictions on many occasions in the Gita but finally makes everything explicitly clear.

"In one instance Krishna says that He is in everything and everything is in Himself. *(Yoman pacyati sarvatra, sarvam samayi pachyathi).* If everything is within Himself, He becomes the basis of each one of them, their atman. But if He is in everything, they become His basis. Which of the two claims is correct? This confusion is quite natural.

"Swami or atma is the basis of all. That will be the correct understanding of the text. Because He is said to be in everything, it should not be taken to mean that each of them sustain Him. They get their form and life from Him. They don't have an existence independent of His existence. So they are not His basis. It's only He who governs everything. Sri Krishna himself is explicit about this.

"All created beings are like the puppets in a puppet show. God remains within each of them and accounts for their dynamics. *(isvara sarva bhuthanam hruthe dese Arjuna dhishtatha bramyam sarva budhani yanthraru doni mayaya).*

"Bhagavan who clarifies thus in the Gita again teases the mind. He who says that He is in everything and everything is within Himself also says that nothing is with Him and He is also not in anything. *(nasa math sthani na saham dheshu avasthitha)*. What is spoken about here is the philosophy of the transcendence of the atman.

"What a puzzle is this? There is no puzzle.

"Not all are able to understand me.

"(na aham prasake sarvasya) That is my yoga maya *(yoga maye samavrutha)"* he declares.

"What kind of a philosophy is this? I'm not able to make anything out of it" - do you feel so?

"If you think deeply, you can resolve the puzzle. If the God has said that he will not be understood by anyone, he may have meant that if there had been a thousand, none of the

thousand would be able to understand Him. But when he says "not all are able to understand me", He means to say that at least one among the thousand may become aware of Him. He did not say that He would be understood by none. He only meant that not all would be able to understand him. *(kasyapi / sarvasya)* So he is understood by some.

"Who are those few? They are the jnanis unaffected by the yoga maya he has referred to. Only these jnanis can resolve the contradiction in terms in the claim.

"I am in everything and nothing is with me".

"There is a garland on the street. It is lying in semidarkness. Someone who came that way happens to step on it and cries, "Snake, a snake!" in fear.

"Whatever is the garland or the snake, is the same. When he realises that it is only a garland, he understands that there is no snake. But what was the basis of the existence of snake? It had been the garland.

"Just as the garland is taken for a snake, the ignorant look at the unitary Brahman as the divergent world and are deluded. The basis of the world is Brahman.

"What is the meaning of the saying "I am in the world. The world is within me"? It is like saying that the snake is in the garland and the garland is in the snake - Aren’t both the claims true?

"The snake has swallowed the garland to the one who cried "Snake" in fear. The basis of his perspective is the non existent snake. When ignorance is dispelled and it is understood for the garland that it is, the garland hides the snake within itself. The garland becomes the basis of the perspective. Even if the world is taken for the ultimate reality deluded by illusion, Isvaran alone sustains the world, Himself remaining its basis.

"To him who dispels the illusory appearance of the world with the help of his jnana, Isvaran becomes everything and himself as well. At the stage of *nirvakalpa samathi*, other than the vision of God, no other vision including that of the world, will be registered. When there is no world at all unto them, is it not stupidity to talk in terms of the relationship of the non existent world with the only existent reality, God? During the period of lack of true wisdom, everything like the body, the breath, mind and knowledge are distinctly felt. At the advent of jnana, when *atmananda* is felt, none of these exists. In fact that stage is a transcendent stage, transcending all these. That’s why Krishnan standing at the threshold of jnana had declared, "There is nothing with me; I am also not in anything". Just because an ignorant man had felt that there was a snake in the garland, can it be taken to indicate that there was a snake actually in the garland or there was a garland actually in a snake?

Kambar writes about this is Suntara Kantam:

alankalil tonrum poymmai

aravu ena putam aintum

vilankiya vikarap pattin

verupaturra vikkam

kalakuva tevaraik kantal

avar enpar kaivil enti

ilankaiyil porutar anre

Maraikalukku imtiyavar.

"alankal" is garland, *"aravu"* is snake. *Alankalil tonrum poymmai aravu* - the apparently real but illusory perspective of the snake in the garland. Likewise the five elements have in different combinations created the illusion of a world and deluded the mind. Ramachandramurti is the one at the sight of whom this delusion will be dispelled and the garland, Isvaran alone will appear to be.

The staunch Vaishnava Kambar has thus spoken of the manifest form of God in such clear advaitic terms.

Eight
Put the Log in the Water

Kanchi Periyavarkal had once said :

"If you draw a pot filled with water even as it is submerged, it is not heavy. But once it is off the surface of water, it becomes heavy. Huge logs which can't be moved easily are submerged in water and rolled easily. Similarly we should submerge our suffering in the water of jnana. Even then, the pain of suffering would linger. But like the weight of the pot in the water, it will become light enough".

This is the path shown by the one who has freed himself totally from the worldly life. He has said this for the sake of reducing the burden of worldly life.

This is a witness unto the fact that Hinduism is primarily concerned with worldly life.

Hinduism offers consolation to millions of people who are perplexed with their minds having got involved in the affairs of he worldly life.

If the mind is befuddled, the mind becomes obsessive. When it becomes clear, it glows with the brightness of jnana.

Hinduism advocates methods to make the worldly life pleasant. Other religious have not attempted at this.

Even the Sanyasis who have no personal sorrow, keep thinking about sorrows.

Even the Paramathma who is deathless, speaks about death.

Where is not what? Thorns are there not only in the forest but also on the roads. If one is wary, he can walk through the forest unhurt. The unwary can't walk even on the paved road.

Anxiety is a net around oneself.

There are those who throw it around themselves.

God himself throws it around the many on many occasions.

Even those fish which escape the net die when the water dries up.

It's just a matter of time. Some die early; the others die late.

Everyone appears to be happy other than oneself.

Only if the glass reflects well, he can see his own face.

Only others load the cart. The cart does not load itself.

But the human mind loads itself.

What is the way to lighten the load thus stacked?

Kanchi Periyavarkal said, "Drink more of the waters of jnana."

What is this jnana which we repeatedly refer to?

While wearing a torn shirt, doing so with the explicit knowledge of the tear, refusing to regret that it is torn, after having worn it - that is jnana.

"This is only this much and only thus" - this reconciliation is also jnana.

"What if whatever is what? Whatever the divine wills is our course" such resignation is jnana.

In a forest where there are huts, isn't there at least one tiled building?

There is peace even unto the mind full of sadness.

What is important is in whose graceful presence do we stand!.

You cannot look for the portrait of Kokula Kannan in the bathroom. You should not regret that there is no shower in the puja hall.

If the choice and clarity are alright, jnana would also be alright.

The logs of suffering will become lighter in the abundant flow of the waters of jnana.

Why should one try to walk even after having become aware of being caught in fetters?

Why should one cry that he is not able to walk?

Just as there are spaces between the coconut trees in a grove, there is suffering between any two happy occasions.

Between two sufferings there is a happy occasion. Such is the worldly life.

To step on a sharp stone is to feel the pain of it. To step upon a piece of glass is to bleed. If taken care of, the wound is cured. If not, it becomes gangrenous. If it becomes gangrenous even after due care, it is the effect of a karma of the past birth.

The story of suffering stops with this.

The amount of air is decided by the size of the window.

A house with no windows is unhygienic.

Similarly sufferings are decided by circumstances. The responsibility to ward off situations leading to trouble is that of man himself.

That which has befallen us without our knowledge is resolved even without our knowledge.

We can ourselves resolve that which befalls us well with our own knowledge.

The first of the two is resolved through the grace of Isvara.

The second is resolved by the sharpness of our own wit.

What's the use in wailing with neither faith in God nor reason of one's own?

You can have milk if you have bought a cow.

What point is there in blaming God after having bought a bull?

The sufferings with a cause behind them are to be removed by the exercise of one’s own shrewdness.

If you meet with an accident in drunken driving, it is a suffering which has a cause behind.

If you have were caught in a train accident, it is a suffering with no apparent cause behind.

The former can be prevented by yourself; God alone is to save you from the latter.

Jnana is the common name for both.

Insufficient income is one kind of suffering. Even large earning becoming insufficient is another kind of suffering; if you have no income at all, it is yet another kind of suffering.

Whatever may happen in your life, sorrow lurks on the other side of it.

He who holds his arms above his head and staggers cannot escape from suffering!

If sufferings are submerged in the waters of jnana and dragged along, they would become lighter.

Our mothers suffered at our birth; when the mother dies the relatives suffer; between them both, what we undergo is also suffering.

The solution to all sufferings is to dip the mind in the waters of jnana.

On which step of life is there no suffering at all?

If you have no money, that is one kind of suffering.

If you have plenty, income tax is a suffering.

There is ice both on the northern and southern hemispheres.

I have already stated that suffering is but a trial.

The example that Kanchi Periyavarkal has used to illustrate how the weight of sorrow can be reduced has greatly impressed me. Let me give you an account of it.

Sita was anxious if she will be able to have Rama as her groom.

Sita was anxious even after having Rama when she had to go to the forest with him.

Sita became anxious when abducted from the forest.

Sita had been anxious awaiting the arrival of Rama to rescue her.

Sita had no escape from anxiety even after her rescue when Rama suspected her fidelity.

If Sita had to meet with suffering at every step in her life, where do you and I stand?

Autumn is the season that worries even the wild tree.

Summer is the season that worries the sand on the river bed.

The irrational animals are worried when they are scared.

Who is going to offer consolation unto all these?

Humanity is in search of consolation.

The other day, someone from Kerala called me over the telephone and sought consolation from me.

If he had said the same to his own neighbour, the neighbour would have shared his own sufferings with him. Both would have been consoled.

Let me restate.

Draw your sufferings through jnana and deliberation just as logs are drawn submerged in water.

If they don't lessen in effect even then, make suffering itself living. What else is there to be done?

Nine
LUST

Wherever man happens to be, lust will prevail.

It is the drama of God to test the masculine and the feminine.

Sins abounded in the world only when sexual passions ran high.

Not only do the itihasas and puranas but also history affirm this.

Lust had been the prime cause behind the fall of many great empires.

Decoits and revolutionaries in hiding had been apprehended when they had lost themselves in indulgence in lust.

Hunger and lust are inevitable in the life of average persons.

Jnanis are those who had abstained from lust with discipline.

A dog reduced to the skeleton and had had not even a piece of bone for days will come to heat just at the sight of a bitch - so says an old song.

The Sanskrit word *kamam* has meanings other than lust.

But if we were to examine the Hindu philosophy focussing on lust, we will find many ways enumerated to avoid lust.

Firstly, a school of sanyasis remain naked only to avoid lust.

The purpose of nudity is to render one ugly enough not to invite the attraction of women.

The body bedecked with ornaments and dressed neatly induces sexual passions.

Well groomed hair and clean shaven face vibrate the cords of feminine passion.

Therefore the bearded faces and unkempt hair of the sanyasis.

The reason for confining to loin cloth has a similar purpose.

"Hare Rama Hare Krishna" movement has of late picked up well in America. In one of their ashrams they took upon themselves a novel exercise.

About twelve men and women stood in water coming up to their thighs. They stood close to each other with man and woman alternating in a round.

They held each other by their shoulders.

Though they were looking at each other's physical parts in nakedness, though they had arms on each other's shoulders, they wanted to curb their lust.

I saw their photograph in the *Life*.

Hinduism shows how even in perfect health lust can be overcome.

"Nirvanam" is renunciation of all feelings and relationships.

Buddhism has taken over the concept of *mahanirvanam* from Hinduism.

Hinduism is the earliest of religions.

The concept of *sanyas* and renunciation took their origin from Hinduism.

Only such of those who had thus renounced can preach to the world. That's how the latter religions had come to adopt those concepts.

The Hindu jnanis avoided the onset of lust avoiding items of food which would induce lust, and bathing in cold water even under very cold conditions.

The sexual organs were called the organs of birth *(jananendriya)*.

They believed that these organs were exclusively meant to give birth to a few lives.

The pleasure thereof was considered petty pleasure.

Tamil also calls it *sitrinbam* - the pleasure of a lower kind.

The wife is not just an instrument whose mission is to appease the heat of her husband's lust.

She has many more social obligations above this.

The woman is five times lustier than the man.

But she has a control over herself ten times greater than that of a man.

This is not a natural endowment.

Hinduism has seasoned her from times immemorial.

Women of lower birth go to the other extreme.

Sivaka Sintamani, one of the five great epics in Tamil and a Jain work of literature, has described both the extremes.

The best of women is described as follows.

samenil satal notal

tannavan tananta kalai

pumanum punaitel inrip

porputan pulampa vaiki

Kamanai enrum sollar

kanvarkai tolutu valvar!

temalar tiruvotoppar

serntavan sellal tirppar.

(When the husband is away from her, she will be prepared to suffer death if necessary. She will retain a certain brightness of nobility even if she refrains from adorning herself. She will never appeal to the God of love. She will live in prayer unto her husband. She will be like Lakshmi residing on the lotus. She will remove her husband's hardships.)

The ignoble women are described thus:

Pennenap patuva kenmo
pitila pirappu nokka
ulnirai utaiya valla
orayiram manatta vakum
ennipat tankai yittal
indiran makalum ange
venneykkul eriyurrarpol
melintu pin nirkumanre

(Listen to what is feminine. She lacks nobility. She has no sense of dignity of birth; she is not a vessel of chastity. She is a person of a thousand minds. If you count a tenner and put it in her hand, she will melt like butter near fire even if she happens to be the daughter of Indiran. She will be at your beck and call.)

Ninety percent of the women belong to the first category.

Those who belong to the second category are the deviants.

The bedroom and lust are part of the mission of begetting children unto the virtuous woman and not pleasure groves.

Pleasure in it is part of the process, nothing more and nothing less. They don't attach any special significance to the pleasure in sex.

It is because Hinduism has brought them up in such a tradition.

Even if the husband does not fulfil her sexual passions to the best, she derives it as the child sucks upon her breast.

The electric effect of lust is of no avail in the case of the Hindu woman born of virtuous families.

But men are different.

Nagging lust goads them to go beyond the boundaries.

The system of *devadasis* was evolved only to appease this monstrous lust of the otherwise average worlding, lest he should seduce women in families.

Hinduism advocates monogamy to those who could adopt it; Hinduism also permits and tolerates the man who goes for more than one woman.

We see both these kinds of men in the same epic living in the same place.

Rama was an *ekapattini viratan.*

Dasaratan had sixty thousand wives.

Dasaratan is not condemned on that score.

But Rama was praised.

Promiscuity was not justified but tolerated.

At the same time confining oneself to one's own wife was applauded.

It was assigned the status of a divine attribute.

The mission of Hinduism consists of acknowledging the essential ficklemindedness of human nature and working a way out in slow degrees through persuasion.

It does not approve of surgical methods in dealing with human passions.

It adopted the culture of remediation after the recognition of a flaw.

"You may eat pork. But beware, it may fatten you. Be wary", Hinduism persuaded and did not go about dictating terms.

A few men will have fits if they indulge in sex after having taken an oil bath.

Forbidding sex on such occasions, they were not threatened in the name of physical harm but warned in the name of poverty - *tarittiram.*

Hinduism does not consider lust a crime.

But it describes at length in stories how lust has led to crimes.

Young widows read the scriptures, the puranas and the itihasas. They win over lust. How does it happen?

What will happen if they habitually read our weeklies and monthlies.

Hinduism handles lust which is the inevitable passion of the average man, in conventional terms.

It has aptly described when lust becomes sinful.

Somewhere in the sastras what kind of sexual partnership is appropriate to the human body is described.

If one were to have sex with a woman older than himself by ten or more years, he becomes lean and lustreless.

If he has a younger partner his face becomes brighter.

Why should religious literature describe all these?

On the one hand, it is because of its concern for good health.

On the other hand, it is a question of morality. If a woman is prepared to have sex with a man ten year younger than her, she should either be a woman of bad character or should be someone else's wife. Such promiscuity is to be prevented.

But then, will not writing in appreciation of having sex with girls much younger than oneself lead even to raping?

Oh no! That's why it has acknowledged bigamy.

Hinduism decides upon a certain quantum of whatever you desire to have and permits you to live within such limitations only to ultimately make you the enlightened.

It is so with indulgence in sex too.

When lust leads to sin, the punishment thereof becomes severe.

If Hinduism also intimidates, it does so only when the limits are transcended.

Who can refute if I say, "Hinduism wholeheartedly accommodates the lust of man as long as it does harm to none and spoils none"?